DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 460 639 FL 025 645

AUTHOR Fujita, Mariko; Sakamoto, Masako
TITLE EFL Composition Evaluations by Native EFL and Japanese EFL Instructors.
PUB DATE 1998-11-00
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (23rd, Hamamatsu, Japan, October 1997).
PUB TYPE Journal Articles (080) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
JOURNAL CIT JACET Bulletin; v29 p137-154 1998
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Japanese; *Language Teachers; *Native Speakers; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Teacher Characteristics; *Writing (Composition); *Writing Evaluation; Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS Japan

ABSTRACT

This study compared the writing evaluations performed by native English speakers and native Japanese speakers who teach writing in English as a foreign language (EFL) in Japan. Subjects were 32 Japanese and 32 native English-speaking EFL instructors, divided into 2 mixed groups of equal size and proportion. One group evaluated an authentic composition by a Japanese university student, written in a Japanese rhetorical pattern and modified for the study's purpose; the second group evaluated a composition written by one of the researchers and based on a North American rhetorical pattern. It was found that: (1) both groups rated the composition based on an American rhetorical pattern higher than that written on a Japanese rhetorical pattern; (2) for both groups, organization was the most pervasive assessment criterion; (3) grammatical errors did not influence either group in assessing compositions; and (4) several teachers had totally different perceptions of the compositions. Both compositions are appended. (Contains 22 references.) (MSE)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 460 639

大学英語教育学会　紀要第29号抜刷
（1998年11月）

EFL Composition Evaluations by Native EFL and Japanese EFL Instructors

Mariko Fujita
Keio Shonan Fujisawa Junior and Senior High School
Masako Sakamoto
Bunka Women's University

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mariko Fujita

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FL 025645

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EFL Composition Evaluations by Native EFL and Japanese EFL Instructors

Mariko Fujita
Keio Shonan Fujisawa Junior and Senior High School
Masako Sakamoto
Bunka Women's University

I. INTRODUCTION

In EFL teaching settings, more nonnative speakers of English, in general, teach English writing than do native speakers of English (NESs). In Japan, this tendency is visible everywhere. The majority of the NESs usually teach oral English and Japanese teachers of English teach other skills, one of which is English writing.

There are many anecdotes about how native and nonnative English teachers teach writing. For example, some Japanese teachers tend to correct every single grammatical error in English compositions without giving any feedback about the content. This may be because English writing is regarded as translation from Japanese to English at the secondary school level. On the other hand, native EFL teachers who teach writing at Japanese universities often complain that it is difficult to understand what their students write in English, because English compositions written by their students are often strongly influenced by a Japanese writing style. These anecdotes reveal what teachers value in writing and how they rate writing as well as their educational philosophies and perspectives. More specifically, these anecdotes reveal various emphases in teaching writing.

Schmitt (1993) asked 18 Japanese EFL teachers and 20 native-speaking assistant English teachers to evaluate a variety of student composition errors for seriousness and asked them to state the criteria they used in their error judgments. He found that the Japanese EFL teachers tended to judge grammatical errors more gravely than their native EFL teachers and some explicitly used grammatical accuracy as their main criterion in grading papers, while most of the native EFL teachers noted comprehensibility as the primary basis for their judgment.

There has been little research on differences in writing assessment by Japanese teachers of English and native English teachers. In this paper, we will examine the criteria used by Japanese EFL and native EFL instructors in evaluating writing.

II. BACKGROUNDS

1. Assessment by Raters of Different Backgrounds

Comparative studies do exist on the assessment of ESL/EFL compositions by raters from different backgrounds and according to different methods of rating. The results of the studies have been insightful, but mixed.

Several studies compared differences between ESL teachers, English teachers, and

professors without formal training in evaluating ESL writing. In a study involving the ratings of 112 essays by 8 teachers in the English faculty and 8 in the ESL faculty of a large university, Brown (1991) found no significant differences between the scores assigned to NES and ESL essays. Brown concluded that English and ESL teachers seem to "assign very similar scores–regardless of differences in background or training" although they may, however, "arrive at those scores from somewhat different perspectives" (p.601).

Santos (1988), in looking at the reactions of 178 native English speaking professors without formal training in evaluating ESL writing, found that they judged content more severely than language use when reading two ESL writing samples. He found that: (a) professors judged content more severely than language use; (b) professors rated lexical errors as the most serious; (c) native-English-speaking professors were more lenient in their judgments than nonnative-speaking professors; (d) younger professors were more irritated by errors than older professors.

Song and Caruso (1996) found that in holistic evaluation, English and ESL faculty raters differed significantly, with English teachers assigning higher scores to all four American university essay samples, whereas in analytic evaluation, the two groups did not differ significantly in rating specifically categorized features. They also found that in holistic evaluation, English faculty instructors seemed to give greater weight to overall content and quality of rhetorical features in the writing samples than they did to specific features of language use.

A few studies have investigated the differences in writing assessment between Japanese EFL teachers and native EFL teachers. A study by Connor-Linton (1995) compared the criteria which American ESL instructors and Japanese EFL instructors used in rating ten compositions written by adult L1 Japanese EFL students. He found that the Japanese EFL teachers focused on matters of accuracy (content, word choice, and grammar), while the American ESL teachers focused on both intersentential features of the discourse and specific intrasentential grammatical features. Connor-Linton points out that the results underscore an important methodological point:

> Quantitative similarities in ratings may mask significant qualitative differences in the reasons for those ratings. That is, the American ESL and Japanese EFL instructors in this study, although agreeing substantially in their end-result ratings, followed different processes in arriving at those similar ratings and in fact disagreed about what constitutes strong or weak writing (p. 99).

Kobayashi and Rinnert (1996) examined how 465 readers with different backgrounds evaluated 16 versions of Japanese EFL students' English compositions. The researchers assumed that both readers' background and features of the written text would affect judgments of written quality. They found that there were no significant differences between American and Japanese EFL teachers in the overall assessment of culturally influenced rhetorical patterns (Japanese vs. American English), but Japanese English teachers gave significantly higher scores than native English teachers to the "Japanese introduction." The results of the study show that even though composition evaluation

involves a multiplicity of factors, "the assessment of writing quality can be influenced by culturally influenced rhetorical patterns" (p.424).

The validity of contrastive rhetoric and schema theory on the basis of readers' evaluations has also been examined. Hinkel (1994) explored 28 native and 146 nonnative speakers' pragmatic interpretations of English texts. Her study compared those speakers' evaluations of four short essays, two written by native speakers and two by advanced ESL learners. There was little similarity between native and nonnative speakers' judgments. Hinkel concluded that nonnative speakers exposed to different notions pertaining to writing appear to interpret L2 rhetorical notions differently from native speakers. The results of the study indicate that "the advanced notions and conceptualization of writing appropriate in the teaching of compositions to NSs of English may not be fully accessible for pragmatic interpretation even to highly trained NNSs" (p.374).

Another study related to contrastive rhetoric was conducted by Yoshimura (1996). The study focused on rhetorical schemata, which is defined by Carrell (1988) as background knowledge of the formal rhetorical structure of the text. The findings of the study failed to show any cultural differences in readers' holistic judgment about text organization. Yoshimura concluded that the lack of significant differences between 71 Japanese and 74 American readers' evaluations or preferences for rhetorical organization and schema challenges "the L1 and L2 researchers' belief that there are discourse differences between Japanese and English writing" (p.207).

The mixed results of the above studies indicate a need for further research to probe how native and nonnative EFL raters arrive at their scores in evaluating EFL compositions and what their perspectives and criteria are. In terms of rating compositions, it is essential to discuss measurement techniques for compositions since these will be crucial tools for further investigation.

2. Holistic Assessment versus Analytic Assessment

There has been an enormous volume of research on both holistic and analytic evaluations of compositions. Both kinds of evaluation seem to have strengths and weaknesses, and there are various opinions about the evaluations. Holistic assessment of compositions, for example, has been widely used in college programs in the United States (Vaughan, 1990), and its strengths and weaknesses have been discussed for years (Hamp-Lyons, 1991; Homburg, 1984; Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, & Hughey, 1981; Perkins 1980; Vaughan, 1990; White 1984).

Arguing against holistic assessment, Perkins (1980) points out that "holistic evaluations tended to be rather subjective value judgments not based on any empirical objective criteria" (p.61-62). Jacobs (1981), however, considers such subjective judgments of readers as essential in composition evaluation. One of the weaknesses of holistic rating which is often pointed out is rater reliability. It does not seem an easy task for even trained raters to rate compositions in the same way every time (White, cited in Vaughan, 1990). However, trained raters at the University of Michigan holistically grade compositions written by foreign students quite successfully, and they are reported to be relatively reliable (Vaughan 1990).

In terms of validity, Homburg (1984) reports that the results of the discriminant analysis in his study provide adequate support for the validation of holistic evaluation of ESL compositions. However, Tedick and Mathison (1995) question about the validity of holistic scoring based on the anomalies that they discovered.

A number of analytic assessment scales for ESL writing evaluation have been suggested. Jacobs et al. (1981) proposed the "ESL Composition Profile", which requires raters to identify assessments under different categories. Hamp-Lyons (1991) has developed a multiple-trait assessment. However, little is known about what factors Japanese EFL teachers and native EFL teachers use in rating English compositions written by Japanese students when they are not guided by such instruments, as in the case for most teachers in EFL settings.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the present study is to look at the unclear aspects of criteria used in EFL writing assessment. We still do not know what criteria are more adequate than others or which assessment approach is better to adopt, holistic or analytic. The findings of this study will provide evaluative criteria that native speakers of English and Japanese teachers of English tend to use in rating English compositions written by Japanese students. This will be significant in the sense that both groups of teachers will be able to learn from each other how people of different backgrounds evaluate and perceive compositions written by Japanese students. Also these criteria can be used to improve measurement tools.

This study attempts to investigate the following research questions:

1. What factors do Japanese EFL instructors and native EFL instructors use in assessing English compositions?
2. What differences and similarities are there in the evaluative factors between Japanese EFL instructors and native EFL instructors?

IV. METHOD

1. Compositions

Two types of compositions (Composition A and Composition B) were developed by the researchers (Appendix A & B). Composition A was taken from an authentic text written by a Japanese university student and was modified for the purpose of the study. Composition B was written by one of the researchers. Composition A is written based on a Japanese rhetorical pattern and Composition B on a North American English rhetorical pattern. Both were common rhetorical patterns found in school writing and were written on the topic of cellular phones. The rhetorical patterns we chose for this study were based on the general traits of American and Japanese patterns (Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1996). The compositions were examined to see whether they conformed to the rhetorical patterns described in Table 1 by a native speaker of English, a bilingual who has lived in Japan for 15 years and who speaks Japanese fluently.

To examine the effect of sentence level errors, for both compositions, versions with

Table 1

General Traits of American and Japanese Rhetoric

	American	Japanese
Introduction	thesis stated	topic stated
Transition between paragraphs	tight	less tight
Conclusions	thesis restated	expanded idea
Main point	position taken	no position
Overall movement	deductive	inductive

Table 2

Descriptive Features of the Four Compositions

	Japanese Rhetoric		American Rhetoric	
	Error Free (Comp A)	With Errors (Comp AE)	Error Free (Comp B)	With Errors (Comp BE)
Words	539	536	537	534
Paragraphs	5	5	5	5
Sentences	40	40	35	35
Average sentences per paragraph	8	8	7	7
Words per sentence	13	13	15	15
Letters per word	4	4	4	4
Readability				
Flesch reading ease	72.4	72.3	75.6	75.8
Fresch grade level	7.7	7.7	7.4	7.4

errors (Composition AE and Composition BE) were developed by the researchers. Both compositions had 20 errors each: 3 word choice, 2 word order, 2 adverbial, 3 verb form, 2 number agreement, 3 preposition choice, 1 pronoun, and 4 article errors. We selected these errors, because they are errors that Japanese students are prone to make. The descriptive features of the four compositions (Japanese rhetorical pattern with no errors, Japanese rhetorical pattern with errors, American English rhetorical pattern with no errors, and American English rhetorical pattern with errors) are shown in Table 2. The researchers kept the length and the reading level of the four compositions as much the same as possible.

2. Raters

Participants in this study were 32 native EFL instructors and 32 Japanese EFL instructors. They were selected on the basis of their availability at the time of data collection. The teaching experiences of the instructors varied from one year to 37 years.

About 70% of the Japanese EFL teachers and 80% of the native EFL teachers had taught more than five years, and about 65% of the Japanese and 87% of the native EFL teachers were experienced in teaching English compositions to Japanese students. About half of the teachers in both groups held a master's degree in TESOL, linguistics or in other fields. The working places varied from elementary school to university. About 50% of the Japanese EFL teachers and 78% of the native EFL teachers had university teaching experience and the rest mainly junior and senior high school and vocational school experience. Most of the native EFL instructors were residents in the Kanto and the Kansai area for more than three years. Approximately 70% of the native EFL teachers were from the U.S. and Canada, the rest from the U.K. Approximately 10% had resided in Japan for less than 3 years, and more than 70% had been in Japan for 6 or more years.

Japanese EFL teachers and native EFL teachers were divided into two subgroups and randomly assigned to assess two compositions of different rhetorical patterns. The directions for the task was as follows:

> Imagine you are an EFL writing teacher at a Japanese university.
> You have asked your students to write a composition on the topic of
> cell phones and you are going to assess their compositions.
> Read the following two compositions written by Japanese university
> students and rate them on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 6 (excellent).
> At the end of each composition, please write your evaluative criteria
> (reasons for your grading score) either in Japanese or English.

Fifteen Japanese EFL teachers and 15 native EFL teachers were asked to assess error-free compositions, whereas 17 Japanese EFL teachers and 17 native EFL teachers were asked to assess compositions with errors (Table 3), on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 6 (excellent), and to write their evaluative criteria or reasons for their grading scores either in Japanese or in English. They were asked to do this task at home and to take as much time as they needed. Since the purpose of the study was to find out what evaluation factors EFL teachers use, no specific measures or criteria were given to the raters, because indicating specific criteria might interfere with how raters usually rate compositions.

Table 3

		The Number of the Raters			
	No. of raters	Error-Free JR	Error-Free AR	With Errors JR	With Errors AR
JT	32	15	15	17	17
NT	32	15	15	17	17

Note. JR=Japanese rhetorical pattern; AR=American English rhetorical pattern; JT=Japanese EFL teachers; and NT=native EFL teachers.

After having finished scoring a set of two compositions (one with errors and one without errors), all raters were asked to respond to three questions on the compositions they

assessed: (1) Which composition do you prefer? (2) Which composition is easier for you to follow? and (3) Which composition appears to have more grammatical errors?

In addition to the above rating assessment, they were asked to answer five questions on their beliefs about English writing assessment (Appendix C).

V. ANALYSIS

A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVR) were used with the scores on the compositions as the dependent variables, and errors (error-free or with errors), groups (Japanese EFL teachers and native EFL teachers), and rhetorical patterns (American and Japanese) as the independent variables. The alpha level was set at .05.

In analyzing the raters' written criteria or reasons for giving scores to the compositions, the researchers categorized the criteria into five categories: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

MANOVA was used to explore the beliefs of the two groups about writing assessment. The questionnaire used a Likert 7-point scale with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 7 being *strongly agree* (Appendix C).

VI. RESULTS

1. Scores of the compositions

Table 4 shows the mean scores and the standard deviations of the raters' holistic scores of the compositions.

ANOVR, summarized in Table 5, indicates that main effects for the group variable and the error variable are not significant. There was no significant difference between Japanese EFL teachers and native EFL teachers in the scores given to the compositions of different rhetorical patterns. Since there was no interaction between the group variable and the error variable, the error variable did not influence either of the scores given by the groups of raters. Both groups gave a significantly higher score to the composition written based on the American English rhetorical pattern than to the composition written based on the Japanese pattern, regardless of errors.

Table 4

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Compositions

Rater	Error-Free		With Errors	
JT	JR	AR	JR	AR
M	3.57	4.5	3.32	5.05
SD	1.05	1.21	1.16	.95
NT				
M	3.53	4.7	3.94	4.88
SD	.92	.92	1.00	.99

Note. JR=Japanese rhetorical pattern; AR=American English rhetorical pattern; JT=Japanese EFL teachers; and NT=native EFL teachers.

Table 5

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	*P*
Between subjects					
Group	.76	1	.76	.59	.447
Error	1.59	1	1.59	1.22	.273
Group x Error	.16	1	.16	.13	.725
Within Residual	78.20	60	1.30		
Within subjects					
Rhetoric	45.23	1	45.23	54.66	.000*
Group x Rhetoric	.60	1	.60	.73	.398
Error x Rhetoric	.64	1	.64	.77	.384
Group x Error x Rhetoric	2.06	1	2.06	2.48	.120
Within Residual	49.65	60	.83		

* $p < .05$

2. Assessment Factors

The raters' assessment criteria or reasons for giving scores to the compositions were grouped into five categories: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. First, one of the researchers categorized them, and then the other researcher confirmed the categorization. There was no disagreement as to the categorization of the criteria.

Table 6 shows what assessment factors the Japanese EFL teachers and the native EFL teachers used. There was no significant difference in the two groups' assessment factors. Contrary to the findings by Connor-Linton (1995), the results indicate that both Japanese EFL teachers and native EFL teachers value organization more highly than any other category. After organization, content and grammar are the next important factors.

Table 6

Writing Assessment Criteria

Categories	JT (N=32)	NT (N=32)
Organization	32 (100 %)	30 (93.8%)
Content	22 (68.8%)	22 (68.8%)
Grammar	18 (56.3%)	19 (59.4%)
Vocabulary	13 (40.1%)	16 (50.0%)
Mechanics	1 (3.0%)	6 (18.8%)

We also analyzed the rest of the assessment factors other than those five representative variables. The following are some salient criteria that the teachers in the two groups used.

Criteria both groups indicated as good quality of English compositions are:

1. A variety of sentence structures and sophisticated sentences.
2. Fluency: Writing should flow smoothly, and it should be easy to follow.
3. "Native-likeness": naturally written, not Japanese discourse.
4. Interesting: the reader-based writing.

The native teachers

1. The theme should not be unrealistic, vague and/or prejudiced, but practical and focused.
2. Objectivity: Arguments should not be backed up by too personal anecdotes.
3. Register and voice of writing are important to keep in mind: use of "I", "we" and "They".

The Japanese teachers

1. Originality, creativity and "insightfulness" are important.
2. Volume: In order to establish reasoning and clarity, a writer needs to produce a certain amount of writing.

Table 7 shows the results of the responses of the teachers to the three questions on the compositions they assessed. What is interesting is that for Question 3, among the raters who assessed Compositions AE and BE(compositions with errors), about half of them found Comp AE to have more grammatical errors than Comp BE, though the

Table 7

	Comp A and B		Comp AE and BE	
	JT(N=15)	NT(N=15)	JT(N=17)	NT(N=17)
Question 1				
I prefer Comp A (or AE)	4	1	0	2
I prefer Comp B (or BE)	8	14	17	11
I prefer neither	2	0	0	4
No answer	1	0	0	0
Question 2				
Comp A (or AE) was easier to read	4	0	1	2
Comp B (or BE) was easier to read	10	14	15	14
Neither of them	0	1	1	1
No answer	1	0	0	0
Question 3				
Comp A (or AE) appears to have more errors	1	2	7	9
Comp B (or BE) appears to have more errors	3	1	1	3
Both have about the same	5	4	7	5
Neither has any errors	2	7	2	0
No answer	4	1	0	0

two compositions had the same number of errors and errors of the same type. This result may indicate that the raters' preference may influence their perception of language use in compositions. That is, if a rater does not prefer a composition or does not find it easy to read, he or she tends to evaluate the language use of the composition negatively.

4. Beliefs in Writing Assessment

Table 8 presents the means and standard deviations of the five dependent variables for the two groups. The five dependent variables were five questions on the questionnaire which showed what assessing factors the raters weighed more in assessing English compositions by Japanese students (Appendix C). MANOVA showed that Pillais, Hotellings, and Wilks were not significant (P=.139). Therefore, there was no significant difference between the Japanese EFL teachers and the native EFL teachers in their beliefs in writing assessment. However, the Japanese EFL teachers seem to emphasize organization and grammatical accuracy as assessment factors more than do the native EFL teachers.

Table 8

The Beliefs in Writing Assessment

	JT (N=32)		NT (N=32)	
	M	*S.D.*	*M*	*S.D.*
Question 1	4.1	1.6	5.0	1.5
Question 2	4.3	1.7	5.7	1.5
Question 3	5.3	1.3	5.7	0.9
Question 4	4.4	1.6	5.3	1.1
Question 5	6.0	1.1	6.4	0.8

VII. DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that there is no statistical difference between the Japanese EFL teachers and the native EFL teachers in their assessment of two compositions of different rhetorical patterns. Both groups used organization most as an assessment factor, followed by content and grammar. We assume the reason why there was no difference in writing assessment between the two groups of the teachers was that the teachers in both groups were experienced teachers and knew the writing styles or weaknesses of Japanese students well. The study might have produced different results if the native EFL teachers had been newly arrived teachers to Japan and had no experience in teaching Japanese students.

Grammatical errors did not influence either group of teachers in assessing compositions. This may be because the errors were small local errors which did not interfere with their understanding of the meaning of the compositions. If there had been many global errors that hindered their understanding of the compositions, the result might have been different.

Most of the teachers who participated in the study preferred the composition written based on the American English rhetorical pattern. However, 5 Japanese and 2 native

teachers out of 64 preferred or found it easier to read the composition written based on the Japanese rhetorical pattern (See Table 7). Small as they are as the number, we believe it is worth reporting that there were several teachers in the study who perceived the compositions differently. Here are two examples of contradictory comments on the two compositions by the participants of the study.

Rater A

> Composition A starts with an attention-getting question. The author of Composition A opens an avenue of discussion and then immediately cuts the flow of the topic with her negative perspective on the issue. Composition A lacks a clear focus and hits upon several disparate, loosely connected problems and solutions related to cell phones. To the contrary, Composition B begins with a clear thesis statement and does not deviate from the content. The organization is clearly structured with an opening paragraph, three enumerated items, and a concluding paragraph to tie the composition together.

Rater B

> Composition A is well-organized and has a good paragraph structure. Each paragraph has a clear topic and is well focused. The arguments given are good and interesting. Composition B is too personal and emotional. It is clear to the reader that this writer personally dislikes cell phones but that fact alone does not establish the existence of a general social problem that requires any solution at all. Composition A appears to be one that a lot of thought and effort went into, whereas in Composition B, the actual content is less coherent and logical than Composition A. Composition B is not so interesting than Composition A.

At least four Japanese EFL teachers (12%) rated the composition based on a Japanese rhetorical pattern (Composition A) more highly than the composition based on an American English rhetorical pattern (Composition B). These four teachers used organization and content as assessment factors, arguing that the organization of Composition B was inferior to that of Composition A. Though it was not statistically significant in this study, this result may support the findings by Kobayashi & Rinnert (1996) that Japanese EFL teachers in their study preferred both American English and Japanese rhetorical patterns.

We based the criteria of what constitutes American English rhetoric and Japanese rhetoric on the study by Kobayashi and Rinnert (1996), but not much has been learned as to the exact differences between the two types of rhetorical patterns since the study of Hinds (1982).

Kamimura and Oi (1996) found that Japanese rhetoric has an impression of circularity. Also, it was found that American students used more rational appeals and Japanese students used more affective appeals. American argumentative strategies were logical, whereas Japanese strategies were more emotional. Takano (1993) examined the

extent to which the transferred rhetorical organization of Japanese is discordant with native English readers' expectations and found that the texts which exhibit the L1 rhetorical transfer show some characteristics: (a) The major point of the argument is at the end of paragraph; (b) Discourse markers which indicate transitions in the progress of argument are missing; (c) Linearity is lacking; (d) A certain degree of ambiguity and indirectness show that the writer's intended theme is implied or felt rather than literary read; (e) The typological features of Japanese are transferred. Takano argues that "the conflict between the readers' expectations and the writers' rhetorical strategies is a major factor hampering readers' perception and evaluation of the texts" (p.70).

Kirkpatrick (1997) and Kubota(1997) suggest that researchers and writing teachers should be wary of stereotyping cultural conventions of writing. Kubota argues that previous studies on contrastive rhetoric "tend to view language and culture as exotic and static rather than dynamic, and overgeneralize the cultural characteristics from a few specific examples" (p. 460). She urges writing teachers not to overgeneralize cultural differences but to promote rhetorical pluralism. We admit that placing too much emphasis on cultural differences is dangerous, because it may create stereotypes. However, we believe contrastive rhetoric research still has a role to play since the present study showed a preference for an American English writing style by both the Japanese and the native EFL teachers.

VII. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study are encouraging to Japanese EFL writing instructors. The study shows that it is possible for Japanese EFL teachers to evaluate EFL compositions as adequately as native EFL teachers do. Many Japanese EFL teachers have found assessing EFL compositions not simple, but quite often troublesome and often overwhelming. Being non-native speakers of English, they have felt insecure about grading EFL compositions without native-like English proficiency and the linguistic intuition of native-speakers of English. Though high English proficiency and much teaching experience seem to be the keys in evaluating EFL compositions for Japanese EFL teachers, the results of this study bring good news to Japanese EFL teachers that they can assess English compositions in similar ways as do native EFL teachers.

Another implication of the study is that there is a need to recognize the importance of teaching *organization* when Japanese students write English compositions. Most of the teachers, both the Japanese and the native EFL teachers, used organization as the most important assessment factor in this study. There has been no attempt to propose categories of assessment for Japanese students, and so it may be helpful to set up an "EFL Composition Profile" for Japanese students. The ESL Composition Profile proposed by Jacobs et al. (1981) seems to emphasize content over organization, since Jacob's ESL Composition Profile allots 30 points to content and 20 points to organization. We would like to propose an EFL Composition Profile for Japanese students which allots 30 points to organization and 20 points to content, because rhetorical organization is assumed to be the most difficult part in writing English for Japanese students. Since

assessment factors influence the teaching of writing, this EFL Composition Profile would help both teachers and students in Japan to become aware of the importance of organization in writing English compositions.

IX. LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. First, though Composition A was taken from an authentic text, Composition B was not. One of the compositions used in this study was contrived.

Also, there was no control for the possible effect of the order in which the compositions were read. The directions of the assessment task were not sufficiently contextualized, either. We did not specify clearly enough the writing situation nor the types of the compositions, which might have confused some of the raters.

Moreover, we asked participants to write whatever criteria or reasons they used in assessing compositions, but we did not ask how much weight they gave to each assessing factor. Therefore, how much weight they gave to assessing factors was not known from the research design. However, this study suggests that experienced teachers tend to give greater weight to organization than to grammar.

As for our categorizing scheme, we categorized what the raters wrote as assessing criteria or reasons for giving scores into five categories. However, these five categories might not have been adequate to capture all the assessment factors by the raters. Some raters used "interestingness" as a factor, but we included it as content.

The sampling of raters might also have been biased. The Japanese teachers in the study may not represent typical Japanese teachers of English, since half of them hold a master's degree in TESOL. Finally, the results of the study may have limited generalizability because of the small number of participants.

In spite of these limitations, we believe that this study has helped to challenge the stereotypic attitudes that Japanese EFL and native EFL instructors hold in assessing English compositions written by Japanese students.

X. CONCLUSION

We investigated the effect of different culturally influenced rhetorical patterns on the assessment of compositions by Japanese and native EFL teachers, and the interaction between rhetorical patterns and language use errors. Our major findings are:

1. Both groups rated the composition written based on an American English rhetorical pattern higher than the composition written on a Japanese rhetorical pattern.
2. For both groups, organization was the most pervasive assessment criterion, followed by content and grammar.
3. Grammatical errors did not influence either group in assessing the compositions.
4. Several teachers in the study had totally different perceptions about the compositions.

Further investigation is necessary to discover reliable assessment criteria for EFL

compositions so that writing teachers and students will benefit by using the criteria.

Acknowledgments

We express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Chris Casanave of Keio University for her valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper, Dr. J. D. Brown of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa for guidance with statistical procedures, and our participants for sharing their precious time for this study.

The research on which this article is based was supported by grant from Gakuji Shinko Shikin of Keio University, Japan.

References

Brown, J.D. (1991). Do English and ESL faculties rate writing samples differently? *TESOL Quarterly, 25*, 587-603.

Carrell, P. L. (1983). Three components of background knowledge in reading comprehension. *Language Learning, 33* (2), 183-207.

Connor-Linton, J. (1995). Crosscultural comparison of writing standards: American ESL and Japanese EFL. *World Englishes, 14* (1), 99-116.

Hinds, J. (1982). Contrastive rhetoric: Japanese and English. *Text, 3*, 183-195.

Hinkel, E. (1994). Native and nonnative speakers' pragmatic interpretations of English texts. *TESOL Quarterly, 28* (2), 353-376.

Hamp-Lyons, L., & Henning, G. (1991). Communicative writing profiles: An investigation of the transferability of a multiple-trait scoring instrument across ESL writing assessment contexts. *Language Learning, 41* (3), 337-373.

Homburg, T. J. (1984). Holistic evaluation of ESL composition: Can it be validated objectively? *TESOL Quarterly, 18* (1) 87-106.

Jacobs, H., Zinkgraf, S., Wormuth, D., Hartfiel, V., & Hughey, J. (1981). *Testing ESL composition: A practical approach*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Kamimura, T. & Oi, K. (1996). A crosscultural analysis of argumentative strategies in student essays. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (30th, Chicago. IL, March 1996).

Kirkpatrick, A. (1997). Traditional Chinese text structures and their influence on the writing in Chinese and English of contemporary mainland Chinese students. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 6* (3), 223-244.

Kobayashi, H., & Rinnert, C. (1996). Factors affecting composition evaluation in an EFL context: cultural rhetorical pattern and readers' background. *Language Learning, 46* (3), 397-437.

Kubota, R. (1997). A reevaluation of the uniqueness of Japanese written discourse. *Written Communication, 14* (4), 460-480.

Perkins, K. (1980). Using objective methods of attained writing proficiency to discriminate among holistic evaluations. *TESOL Quarterly, 14* (1), 61-69.

Santos, T. (1988). Professors' reactions to the academic writing of nonnative- speaking students. *TESOL Quarterly, 22*, 69-90.

Schmitt, N. (1993). Comparing native and nonnative teachers' evaluations of error seriousness. *JALT Journals, 15* (2), 181-191.

Song, B., & Caruso, I. (1996). Do English and ESL faculty differ in evaluating the essays of native English-speaking and ESL students? *Journal of Second Language Writing, 5* (2), 163-182.

Sweedler-Brown, C. (1993). ESL essay evaluation: The influence of sentence- level and rhetorical features. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 2*, (1), 3-17.

Tedick, D. & Mathison, M. (1995). Holistic scoring in EFL writing assessment: What does an analysis of rhetorical features reveal? In Belcher, D. & Brain, G. (Eds.), *Academic writing in a second language*. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex.

Takano, S. (1993). The transfer of L1 rhetoric in L2 texts and its implications for second language teaching. *Journal of Intensive English Studies, 7*, 43-83.

Vaughan, C. (1990). Holistic assessment: What goes on in the rater's mind? In L. Hamp-Lyons (Ed.), *Assessing second language writing in academic writing contexts*. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex.

White, E. (1984). Holisticism. *College Composition and Communication, 35*, 400-409.

Yoshimura, F. (1996). A study of expository rhetorical schema between the Japanese and Americans. *JACET Bulletin, 27*, 201-212.

Appendix A

Composition A

Why are more people carrying around cell phones these days? Cell phones are ringing everywhere, on the train, in the classroom and even in quiet restaurants. This is because cell phones are very convenient. People can call their friends or business associates anytime. However, when cell phones ring in public places, cell phone users talk in loud voices. Their manners are annoying and bother me a lot. People who are reading, studying, dozing or having a cheerful conversation are disturbed by their voices. I wonder why we have to stand such noise.

There are some reasons why the number of cell phones is increasing in Japan. One of the reasons is that the price has been going down. Telephone companies are helping to lower the price in order to increase the number of cell phone users. Since cell phones are very inexpensive, most high school and college students can afford to buy one. In fact, this is a big problem. Many of my classmates have cell phones, but I do not think I will buy one. Cell phones are carried by many busy office workers, too. In an emergency such as an accident in their families, cell phone users can contact their family members quickly. As a matter of fact, owning a cell phone has many advantages, but I think there are many demerits.

Cell phones are noisy and bother people. They also cause various accidents. The number of car accidents is increasing these days because car drivers talk on their cell phones while driving. Their attention is distracted by talking on the phone. Amazing accidents also happen because of the electronic waves created by cell phones. For example, in a crowded train, a person who has a weak heart and who has a machine in

his heart might be endangered by these electronic waves. He may choke or may not be able to breathe. Cell phone users should know that their phones might cause such serious problems. If they think these problems are not serious, they may get into trouble. Thus, cell phones are creating all sorts of problems today.

I think it is unnecessary for high school and college students to carry cell phones. Why do they need such a phone? Isn't carrying a cell phone just a status symbol? Until now young people have had no trouble getting by without cell phones.

The best solution is that cell phone users must think about where they are and what they are doing. Speaking or laughing in a loud voice in public places, especially in hospitals or on jammed trains is not good manners. In this sense, Japanese are self-centered people. I don't like to hear the cell phone ringing and people talking on the phone in such places, so they should turn off the switch in public. Instead of talking, why don't they read a book or do homework? I am sure there are many other ways to kill time other than talking on the phone. If they can not live without a cell phone, they need to turn off the switch in the classroom, on the train and in other public places. Another solution is using an answering machine. I hope all of these suggestions work.

Appendix B

Composition B

Cell phones are one of the worst causes of noise pollution today. Wherever you are, they scream in your ears. Then they cry and shriek in a restaurant, on the train, and even in classrooms all around Japan. More and more people have started to use cell phones, because they give them the freedom to communicate with others at any time and at any place. However, cell phones are causing many problems. They are loud, distracting, and irritating. The number of car accidents caused by the use of cell phones is increasing. Cell phone users tend to ignore people around them and do not care how they behave in public. What should we do to solve these problems? I'd like to suggest three solutions.

First, we must recognize that the noise cell phones make is different from ordinary noise. It is most terrible when cell phones are used on the train. They suddenly destroy the harmony of the sound of the train, prevent us from falling asleep in our warm train seats on a cold winter night, and cut in on our conversations with our friends. Once we hear the noise, our minds seem to stop working. We cannot continue thinking what we were thinking. We just stare at the person who is shouting on the cell phone, and we wonder how rude people can be these days. We feel like shouting back at them, "What has happened to good manners in public?" Thus, the noise from cell phones makes us jump and disturbs us greatly.

Second, we can come up with some policies or rules to prevent people from using cell phones at any place or time. For example, we can increase the charge of cell phones used in public places. The charge should be at least tripled. Telephone companies should not connect calls to and from callers on the train during rush hours. The government should build "cell phone boxes" on the streets and on train platforms, and if

people use a cell phone box, they should get a big discount.

Finally, education can play a great role in improving the public manners of those who use cell phones. These days many people do not respect the privacy of others nor do they feel ashamed if they forget their public manners. They should remember that their freedom may violate the freedom of other people who want to enjoy silence. We should teach good manners in public at home and at school. It may be necessary to reteach old values which are almost gone in this country.

The first two solutions are practical and we may be able to see their effects in a short time. When cell phone users start to pay expensive telephone bills, they may think before they use them. On the other hand, it will take a long time for the third solution to be effective. Educating people is not a simple matter. It will take many years until people start thinking about how to behave in public. Until they do, we will have to endure the sounds of modern madness. However difficult it may be, it is time for us to take action to stop the problems caused by cell phones.

Appendix C

General questions on English compositions: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1. I give credit to the student's composition if I judge the content is good even though it is not well organized.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	disagree a little	don't know	agree a little	agree	strongly agree

2. I give credit to the student's composition if I judge the content is good even though it has many errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	disagree a little	don't know	agree a little	agree	strongly agree

3. I give credit to the student's composition if I judge the content is good even though the range of vocabulary is limited.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	disagree a little	don't know	agree a little	agree	strongly agree

4. I give credit to the student's composition if I judge the content is good even though it has many grammatical errors.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	disagree a little	don't know	agree a little	agree	strongly agree

5. I give credit to the student's composition if I judge the content is good even though I don't agree with what he/she conveys in his/her writing.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	disagree a little	don't know	agree a little	agree	strongly agree